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June 29, 2021

Honorable Graham Filler
Chair of the Judiciary Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
N-1197 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Chair Filler,

The Troy City Attorney's Office and the Troy Police Department encourage the Judiciary Committee to grant a hearing on House Bills 4159 and 4160.

These bills originate from a case that was presented to the City Attorney's Office for requested prosecution. A vulnerable female adult was preyed upon by a man who coerced her into sending him photos of private areas. She was unfortunately not equipped to reject the pressure from this individual, who pretended to be her friend. As with so many vulnerable adults, she was reluctant to disappoint the predator. Following his explicit direction, she sent photos through her phone, not aware of the permanence and the potential widespread distribution that could result. Although directed not to, she was brave enough to tell her parents, and they immediately contacted our office. They were trying to limit the potential widespread dissemination of these photos and also trying to protect their daughter and other potential vulnerable victims. When reviewing the State law, the Police Department and City Attorney's Office found it troubling that there was no legislation to address these types of situations involving vulnerable adults.

We have worked very closely with the victim's family, and believe that House Bills 4159 and 4160 address a gap in the State legislation, and provides added protection for vulnerable adults. We also believe that there are many other individuals throughout the State of Michigan that have been taken advantage of in a similar fashion, even though there may be no record of these incidents, since prosecution was not a viable option. The longer that this gap remains, the greater the chance that another vulnerable adult will be preyed upon.

Thanks for your consideration in scheduling this Bill for a hearing as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Lori Grigg Bluhm, City Attorney
Frank Nastasi, Chief of Police
Nicole MacMillan, Assistant City Attorney
City of Troy, Michigan